The Art of Hypnotic Regression Therapy

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Two of hypnotherapy's stellar practitioners, Roy Hunter and Bruce Eimer, have pooled their expertise to produce a book on regression hypnotherapy so comprehensive, it is the only guide to regression hypnosis a hypnotherapist will ever need. In *The Art of Hypnotic Regression Therapy,* the authors have drawn from their mentors, David Cheek, Charles Tebbetts, and Dabney Ewin, as well as other hypnotherapists whose work established major milestones in hypnotherapy practice.

The authors address the philosophical foundations of regression hypnotherapy, as well as the current controversies over the uses of abreaction, the ethics of past life regression, and false memories. They give practical advice, guidelines, and examples for achieving the five phases of regression hypnosis: client preparation, regression techniques, abreaction and release, subconscious learning, and concluding the session. The objectives for the practitioner are to skillfully employ suggestion and imagery, discover the root cause of the client's difficulties, assist the client to release emotional attachments to the causal event, and assist subconscious learning.

Hunter and Eimer make the case that while regression hypnotherapy is not useful with every client, it is indicated for clients who are well motivated but not responsive to other hypnotic methods. The authors discuss procedural issues such as the initial interview, various inductions, depth of trance, and the differences between initial sensitizing events and activating events that give rise to symptoms.

The authors provide a particularly good discussion of the seven psychodynamics of a symptom (i.e., most emotional problems fit into one or more of these categories) and how to elicit them through interview questions and, during trance, through ideomotor signals: The seven psychodynamics are:

- Authority imprint
- Unresolved issues (often showing up as habits or physical symptoms)
- Secondary gain
- Identification with another person
- Internal conflict
- Painful past experience
- Self-punishment

A number of standard regression and past life techniques are presented. The authors devote a chapter to abreaction and release. They take the position that abreaction is often beneficial in helping clients work through and release attachments to highly emotional past events. They give several examples of things to say to facilitate release. Subconscious relearning takes place when the hypnotherapist helps the client reframe his or her thinking about the symptom or unwanted behavior, while imagining a symptom-free life.

Hunter and Eimer discuss variations on regression for specific applications such as unresolved past grief and post-traumatic stress, and provide case examples of treatment for chronic pain, phobias, smoking cessation, and low self-esteem.

This well-written, well-documented book will make a welcome additional to any hypnotherapist's library. It makes a perfect companion to Ewin and Eimer's Ideomotor Signals for Rapid Hypnoanalysis, which I also recommend.

Judith E. Pearson, Ph.D. is a licensed counselor and life coach specializing in NLP and hypnotherapy in her Springfield, Virginia practice: Motivational Strategies. She is a certified NLP trainer and Executive Director of the National Board of Certified Clinical Hypnotherapists. Her latest book is *Why Do I Keep Doing This?!! End Bad Habits, Negativity and Stress with Self-hypnosis and NLP.*